Family

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Family

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Summary

They didn’t know everything.

All they knew was that her fathers were serial killers.

And that they were dead.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

All her life she'd always been told her fathers were the cool parents.

They threw all the best parties, paid for her to go on amazing vacations, and gave her everything she ever desired.

Now as she stood in the empty house, devoid of anything left that made it theirs, the only thing she wanted was her family again.

Loralei Mischa Lecter-Graham sat on the floor of their bedroom and buried her face into her hands as she sobbed.

How could they have left her all alone?

She didn't want to be alone.

Uncle Jack, Aunt Alana, and even Auntie Bev had come by to try and make her feel better but she didn't trust them.

They didn't know everything.

All they knew was that her fathers were serial killers.

And that they were dead.

Lora still remembered the first time she'd seen them. The lights had all been off and she was meant to be away for the night at her friend Krissy's but she'd come home sick. Daddy and Papa had told her never to go downstairs at night time for as long as she could remember then but a little light led her to the open basement door.

The man on the metal slab was alive and thrashing when Daddy cut into his throat. They'd kissed then, and Papa spread blood across Daddy's cheeks before lifting him up for another.

Lora hadn't told them she saw.

Not for almost a decade.

She wished she had because they'd gone to their graves thinking she'd be ashamed of them.

"Daddy…"

All the money in the world couldn't make up for this.

She was nineteen years old and all she wanted was her fathers back.

Lora cried until her throat was sore and called her boyfriend to say goodnight. She climbed into bed and fell asleep, only to be woken up by the shrill sound of her phone's alarm the next morning.

The house was still empty when she went downstairs, the lack of much at all, making her feel even worse. FBI agents had raided the house while she was away at school, and the subsequent questionings had been easier than coming home to nothing.

She was her fathers' daughter.

Lying came easy.

But when the FBI came hours later, telling her about the cliff, nothing felt like it would be easy ever again.

Lora made breakfast with the eggs in the fridge, one of the few things not taken for analysis, and ate in silence. She put the dish in the dishwasher and froze as memories hit her hard. Papa had taught her how to clean dishes when she was little and it had become a tradition when he was home though Daddy had let her forego the chore for the dishwasher when he wasn't. The tears fell down her face as she remembered, and she had to leave the kitchen to get away from the memories.

The rest of the house wasn't any better, full of nothing but things to trigger a sliver of memory, and by the time she got to their bedroom she was close to broken.

Their bed was gone, taken for analysis like everything else, so she laid on the floor and stared up at the fancy light she'd always loved to marvel at when she was little.

'It looks like stars!'

She wiped her face to be able to see it better, and almost sat up but something gave her pause.

There was a dark mark on the glass, very small and almost imperceptible but there it was.

Lora stood up to see it better, and hated that she couldn't. She raced down the stairs and found a chair, hurrying back up as she tried not to fall. The minute she stood on it and saw what the mark was her heart leapt in her chest.

It was a 2.

She stared around the room, hoping to see more, and then with a sudden clarity jumped down to head to her bedroom.

The '3' was written in the corner of her bathroom mirror, so tiny it was hardly there, and her happiness swelled.

They'd left her a message.

Lora spent the next half hour scouring the house, picking up numbers and writing them down. When she was done and stared at the page, she frowned.

231362 N 823561 W

They were coordinates.

She rushed into the study and went to the globe, following the numbers to see where they'd lead.

Cuba.

Lora didn't know what might be there or what they wanted her to see but she'd go.

She got dressed and felt determined to fulfill their last scavenger hunt.

Papa and Daddy had given her hunts at an early age, little fun quests that always had a toy or a book at the end. She was always very good at them, Papa said it was her keen sense of direction that made her do so well, and now she wanted to spend one last time with them.

One last hunt.

Lora called Auntie Bev in the car and asked her to look after Winston, who had been put into a kennel that called just after her fathers' had gone on the run. She wasn't sure how long she'd be gone but knew Bev would take good care of him.

There was no one there to stop her from buying her ticket to Florida, careful suddenly that perhaps the FBI might follow her trail and come take the last gift her fathers' wanted to give her.

This was for her only.

If she found anything she wouldn't be telling anyone.

She used cash wherever she went, carefully assessing every person she met as she went on, and by the time she rented the boat she knew this was getting out of hand.

So what if the FBI knew where she was?

Why did this feel so important to keep secret?

Lora docked in Havana, pulling out her phone and typing in the coordinates again.

Church of Santo Cristo Del Buen Viaje

She smiled and wiped tears from her eyes.

Of course it would be a church.

The ride from the docks was a long one and she let her mind wander about what she might find there.

A letter?

A drawing?

Maybe even a voice recording?

She wasn't sure and as she got closer the excitement grew, and by the time she paid the driver she was brimming with hope.

They wouldn't have had her come this far for nothing.

Lora paid a donation and walked inside the door. She admired the beauty of it all, wishing she could have seen this with her fathers and heard what no doubt would've been many stories from Papa about things she never would've thought about.

"Beautiful, isn't it?"

She froze.

A hand touched her back.

"I knew you'd come."

She turned around and pressed hands to her mouth, shaking her head as they both rushed to hug her tightly.

"We're so sorry, honey," Daddy whispered, "It wasn't safe and...we weren't sure you'd want to come once you knew."

Papa's hand rubbed circles on her back and shushed her. "I was unsure," he confessed, "Your father was not."

She couldn't speak, hardly able to breathe, and when Papa handed her a handkerchief it smelled like him.

This was real.

"We're so happy you're here. We have so much to tell you."

"And I have your present in the car. I promise it will have been worth the long trip and emotional manipulation."

Lora smiled.

"I can't wait."

She didn't tell them that there was really no need when she'd already gotten the only thing she wanted.

Her family.

End Notes

I swear this is the last one. I promise this time.

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